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MY FIRST RIDE IN SOUTH AMERICA.

In the beginning of 1870, I made a voyage to South America, to pay a visit to an old school-fellow, who had taken to sheep-farming in one of the 'up-river' provinces of the Argentine Republic. My friend, Grey, was to have met me at Monte Video, and taken me back with him to his *estancia*, several hundred miles away in the interior; but when I arrived at Monte Video, I heard, rather to my dismay, that a revolution had broken out up the river, and that Grey would certainly be prevented from coming down, and that I should probably find it very difficult, if not impossible, to get up to him.

In my ignorance of the ways of the country, I did not much enjoy the idea of making my journey into the wilds without a companion; but, after having undertaken a sea-voyage of seven thousand miles, neither did I feel inclined to return without accomplishing my object; so I transferred my luggage from the *Patagonia* to one of the river-boats, and steamed for two nights and a day up the river Uruguay. On the second morning of our voyage we anchored off a few white houses, scattered about among the stunted scrub that fringes the river. The captain thought it was doubtful if we should be allowed to land; however, we did so, without opposition, and indeed without seeing more than two or three boys, who came down to stare at us, and one of whom I persuaded to shew me the way to the *fonda*.

The first sight I saw on landing was a white horse lying dead, with a cavalry saddle on him, and a bullet-hole in his cheek. The town was like a city of the dead; every door and window shut, and not a soul in the streets; only here and there, on one of the flat roofs, a man might be seen on the look-out. The walls of the houses were scored in all directions by bullets, and almost every window shewed a pane or two of glass broken, and often an ominous-looking hole and white splinters in the shutter behind. At the *fonda*—though the sign still swung over the door—the door itself was closed, and no sign of life visible; but after a long

parley between my guide and some one inside, I was admitted into the *pateo* of the inn, where I found a group of frightened women, Spanish Basques, passing from hand to hand a small cannon-ball, which they said had just fallen into the courtyard. Being ushered into the *comedor* (dining-room), I found two Englishmen with sunburnt faces and splashed riding-boots, their revolvers lying on the table beside them, just setting to work at a late breakfast. After a little conversation, I was delighted to find that they knew Grey, and would be able to tell me how to reach him. They gave a doleful account of the state of the country. The government troops had been defeated in a series of engagements, and obliged to retreat beyond the frontier of the province, while a regular reign of terror had been established by the rebels: in the towns, they were levying contributions, sacking houses, and cutting the throats of any of the inhabitants whom they chose to consider 'suspected' (that is, of loyalty to the government); while in the country, armed bands were harrying the *estancias*, and sweeping off all the horses and cattle, for the use of the insurgent army; both in town and country, battle, murder, and sudden death were reigning supreme.

The sound of a dropping fire of musketry going on all the time we were at breakfast, served as a commentary on the information I was receiving. I told my new acquaintances of my anxiety to get out to my friend's place as soon as possible; and one of them, whose name was Fitzgerald, offered to guide me out, and to lend me a horse for the journey, if I would be ready to start in an hour's time. His own residence was, he said, only a few miles from Grey's; and both lay at a distance of about eighteen leagues from the town in which we were, so we should require to pass the night on the road. Of course, I accepted his offer gladly; and having got into my riding-gear, and left my luggage in charge of mine host, twelve o'clock found us jogging slowly up the streets of the town, Fitzgerald riding a magnificent gray horse, and I on a chestnut, rough-looking, and awkward to mount, but, as I found out afterwards,

worth his weight in gold. We got clear of the town without any molestation beyond a good deal of rough chaff as we passed some drinking-houses on its outskirts, which were all full of soldiers drinking spirits, their horses standing hobbled in groups at the doors, and their long lances leaning against the outside walls. At first, our way led over a boundless, treeless *pampa*, a rolling sea of grass, without a sign of human habitation in any direction; herds of cattle and horses were scattered about, and flocks of ostriches, disturbed by our rapid approach, went striding away before us. I could see no landmark of any kind to guide our course, but Fitzgerald rode confidently forward. He had pushed his horse into a gallop when we first entered on the open plain, and this pace we kept up without a break for the first ten miles. My horse galloped like a machine, neither pulling nor flagging, nor looking to right or left, but rising and falling over the long swells of the prairie with an even monotonous stride, that soon brought me into a dreamy state, in which I fancied myself back again on board the *Patagonia*, and out of sight of land. The perfect silence, broken only by the swish, swish of the horses' feet through the long grass, like the lap of smooth water against a vessel's bows, aided the idea; and once or twice a solitary horseman in the distance, galloping steadily and silently on his course across the ocean of grass, seemed like a passing ship gliding by.

I was awakened from this reverie by an exclamation of relief from Fitzgerald as he pulled his horse into a walk, and exclaimed: 'There's the pass;' and away on some lower ground in front of us, I saw a clump of trees, which marks the ford of the first river we had to cross. We rode slowly through the shallow ford, and up a sandy track on the other side, which led through a thick wood of coral trees, while under them cactus and prickly pear made an impenetrable barrier on either side. Suddenly I heard a clank of steel, and turning my head, I found a lancer riding close at my elbow: he had come up unheard over the soft sand. He was wrapped from the throat to half way down his long riding-boots in a heavy black poncho; he wore a slouched felt hat, round which there had once been a motto in gilt letters; and between hat-brim and poncho collar there scowled the most villainous black face I have ever had the fortune to see, in a rather varied experience. He was armed with lance and sabre, and a huge bell-mouthed *trabuco* hung in front of his saddle; the rowels of his iron spurs were full six inches in diameter, and his sabre clanked against them at every stride of his horse. Being a Guacho, it is needless to say that he was well mounted, and sat his horse as if he were part of him. He looked us all over attentively for an instant, and then spurring his horse before us, he lowered his lance, and barred the way, at the same time shouting a few words in Spanish, which had the effect of producing the appearance of a band of about twenty more ruffians, if possible more ill-looking than the first, and dressed and armed in the same way. They seemed to have sprung from the earth. A moment

before, there had not been a living thing visible in any direction, and now we were the centre of a circle of lance-heads, with which, to judge by the countenances of their bearers, we were not unlikely soon to form an intimate acquaintance. I shall never forget the scene: the sandy slope up from the bright water flashing over the ford; the bright blue sky above, seen through the glorious crimson masses of the coral flowers over our heads; and the sombre green of the walls of prickly pear which shut us in on both sides; while above and below us our captors sat dark and silent on their horses, scowling as only South American Guachos can scowl. At last one, whom I took to be the chief, from his carrying a silver-mounted revolver instead of a lance, rode a pace or two forward, and addressing himself to me, demanded to know who we were, whence coming, and where going.

I answered as well as I was able in my imperfect Spanish. The next question was: 'What force of the Blancos are there in town, and who commands them?' The word 'Blanco' puzzled me, for I had forgotten for the moment that the two political parties of the country divided themselves into 'Blancos' (Whites) and 'Colorados' (Reds). So I turned to Fitzgerald for an explanation; but the chief did not seem to approve of our speaking together, and with an ominous click of his revolver lock, he ordered me to address him only. I therefore tried to explain to him how utterly ignorant I must necessarily be of the state of a country in which I had only arrived a few hours before for the first time in my life; but he evidently disbelieved me entirely, and flying into a furious passion, his finger trembling with rage on the trigger of the cocked revolver, he put the muzzle within a yard of my mouth, and ordered me to answer at once without further prevarication, or he would fire down my throat. Meantime, one of his men, looking up for a moment from the cigarette he was lighting, said in a matter-of-course sort of tone, with just a slight tinge of impatience in it: 'Mate-lo no mas?' (Why don't you just kill him?), and his comrades gave an approving grunt. I thought my last hour was certainly come; I could see the bright rifling of the pistol-barrel as it wavered about unsteadily close to my face, and my interrogator's hand shook so, that I was persuaded, whether by accident or intention, another moment or two must see the last of me. I remembered afterwards that none of the thoughts of home and friends which men generally describe as having flashed through their minds on similar occasions, occurred to me, but only a line of poetry that I had been reading shortly before:

The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
Touched; and I knew no more;

I remember also wondering whether I should know anything after the hammer touched the cap. Of course, all passed in an instant, but it seemed to me that I had been reflecting in this way for some minutes, when Fitzgerald, who had hitherto been silent, in obedience to the chief's orders, broke out into a vehement speech, too rapidly spoken for me to be able to catch the whole sense of it, but to the effect that I was really not endeavouring to conceal my information, but that I did not possess any, and that, incredible as it might appear, I had actually lived all my life in a country so barbarous, that the very name of Blanco

was unknown there. This, and much more, Fitzgerald poured out with great fluency, and no doubt in language the best suited to the comprehension of this guerrilla chief. At anyrate, the effect was good, for he slowly and surlily enough put back his pistol in the holster, to my immense relief.

But our troubles were not over yet, for he called forward one of his men whose horse seemed dead beat, and after speaking a word to him, he turned again to Fitzgerald, and ordered him curtly to dismount and unsaddle. Fitzgerald began a few words of protest, which were quickly cut short by a poke in the back with the butt of a lance from the trooper behind him, so he was obliged reluctantly to get off, and exchange the good gray horse for the broken-down trooper. My chestnut, I suppose owing to his unpromising appearance, escaped notice. After this, our enemies drew together, and put themselves in motion towards the ford; while we lost no time in pursuing our way, thankful at having escaped so easily, though Fitzgerald lamented his favourite gray horse, and cursed the one he was riding and the guerrilla leader alternately for the rest of the day.

We had intended to have ridden about ten leagues that day, to an estancia where Fitzgerald was known, and could make sure of a welcome to dinner and bed for the night, completing our journey to Grey's on the following day. This programme, however, was completely disarranged by Fitzgerald's new mount, who, after the first league or two, could not be induced to gallop, so that, in spite of our best efforts, sunset found us plodding through an apparently interminable forest, with no prospect before us but that of camping for the night without food or shelter, and making the best of it. Just as we were preparing to dismount, Fitzgerald caught sight of a number of horses standing at the other end of a long open glade, in a way which convinced him, experienced bushman as he was, that they had been recently unsaddled, and must belong to some guerrilla party, such as that which had stopped us in the morning. We held a consultation, which ended in our agreeing that anything was preferable to camping without food, so we rode straight along the glade till we were near enough to distinguish a dark group of men behind the tethered horses. Then Fitzgerald halted, and shouted in a stentorian voice: 'Ave Maria!'—the proper way of making known one's approach to a dwelling or assemblage of people in that part of the world. This caused an immediate excitement. We saw the men standing to their arms; while two, seizing their lances, vaulted on horseback, and came galloping towards us. Arrived within a short distance, they halted, and challenged: 'Stand! and give the password!' Fitzgerald answered at length, telling our story, and begging to be allowed to camp with them for the night. One of the men then shouted back to the main body; and on receiving an answer, invited us, civilly enough, to advance and speak to the *capitan*.

The capitan, a tall, handsome, gray-haired man, whom Fitzgerald immediately recognised, and addressed as Don Beltran, received us courteously, and informed us that his men had just killed a bullock, and supper would be ready immediately. He then ordered two of the soldiers to unsaddle and tether out our horses; while the rest of the party, who seemed to be about as numerous as our friends of the morning, were busy collecting wood,

lighting fires, and preparing to roast some huge pieces of beef; these were soon pronounced to be ready, and Don Beltran, producing from his holsters a bottle of cognac and a paper containing salt, drew a long dagger from behind his back, and set us an example by cutting an enormous slice off one of the pieces on the fire, and attacking it literally 'tooth and nail.' We followed suit with our sheath-knives; the men, meantime, at their fire a few yards away, making merry with plenty of rough jokes over their meal—the red firelight shewing off their swarthy faces, burned almost black by exposure, and their magnificent white teeth. Our supper concluded with a long pull at the brandy-bottle; and then we lighted our pipes, and the capitan his cigarette, and he gave us an account of all the marchings and countermarchings, surprises, and skirmishes he had been engaged in for the last month or two, since he had been detached with his party. He finished by assuring us that we might sleep in all security that night, as there were none of the insurgents left in that part of the country. Fitzgerald told him of those we had met a few hours before, but he said he had intelligence of their movements, and knew that they were making their way in the opposite direction. So, after smoking one more pipe, we turned in. The men were already sleeping soundly, stretched about in all directions round the remains of their fires, wrapped in their ponchos, and lying on their saddles. The capitan had taken possession of a little deserted wood-cutter's hut, barely large enough to shelter one man; and Fitzgerald and I, collecting our saddles and rugs, made ourselves comfortable at a little distance, against a sort of thick hedge made by a mass of passion-flowers and other creepers tangled together between some tree-stems, and affording a capital shelter from the wind.

I went to sleep the moment I lay down, and slept till daybreak, when I was awakened by a stir in the camp, and found every one awake and preparing to saddle. Not being obliged to get up, I lay still, and watched them moving about in the dim light. Most of the horses had been brought up from where they had been tethered the night before, and some few were already saddled; while of the men, some, hardly awake, were lazily stretching themselves, or struggling into their long boots; some trying to wake the embers of last night's fires; some were collecting arms and accoutrements, preparatory to saddling; and some struggling with refractory horses. Don Beltran himself stood in the entrance of the hut where he had slept, giving some orders to an old sergeant who stood before him, his saddled horse standing hobbled a few paces away.

I was lying half-awake watching all this scene, so new to me, fresh from the peaceful conventionalities of Europe, when a dull, heavy, measured sound began to make itself heard in my left ear, which was next the earth. It impressed me strangely—I don't know why—and I took the trouble to turn over and ask Fitzgerald what on earth it was. He was more sleepy than I, and only said: 'Oh, thunder, I suppose. Don't bother, that's a good fellow.' But next moment he leaped up, wide enough awake: 'It's a charge of cavalry. Get up, man, for God's sake! the Blancos are on us!' and as he spoke, he dashed head foremost through the mass of passion-flowers behind us,

while the forest echoed suddenly to a confusion of such sounds as I pray I may never hear again as long as I live. First, the thunder of the Blancos' horses, as they raced at full speed up the long smooth glade we had ridden down so quietly the night before; and then altogether burst out the yells of the lancers, as they dashed in among the unprepared men, sitting and lying about on the ground, as I have described them, and lanced them without resistance; and the screams of the wounded and dying, as, thrust through by the lances of the foremost, they fell helplessly under the hoofs of the rear rank; and shots and blows, and oaths and groans, and wild shouts, with the shrill neighing of some of the horses, still tethered in the distance, heard over all, made up a babel that even now I don't like to think of.

It was over in a moment. The surprise was complete. The few who were near their horses at the time, vaulted on to them, and escaped at once into the thickest of the forest, without a thought of fighting; those who were unprepared fell at the first onset, as I have said. I saw Don Beltran rush out of the hut as the first of the advancing lance-heads became visible through the trees, shouting to his men: 'Rally, my children. It is impossible that you will let yourselves be cut down without an effort!' The thunder of the charging horses' feet drowned his words—none heard him, or attended to him. The old sergeant turned, and ran for his horse; he would not wait to unbutton his hobbles; but drawing his sharp knife from his back, he slashed through the tough hide, and vaulted up. Before he was well in the saddle, his spurs were in the horse's sides, and he disappeared in an instant among the trees.

Meantime, the gray-haired old capitan ran forward, waving his sword; five lancers rode at him in a cloud of smoke and dust; in an instant he was down, dead, lanced through and through in twenty places. He was the last of his party; and two of the conquerors, dismounting, went round their dead and dying enemies, daggers in hand, and grasping them by the beards, drew back the heads, and cut the throats of all, one by one.

Up to this time, all had passed so suddenly that I had hardly realised what a tragedy I was witnessing; but this dreadful ending to it, while filling me with horror, reminded me that my own position was probably none of the safest, standing as I was in full view of these barbarians; I looked to see what had become of Fitzgerald, and presently saw his face looking out from among the creepers. He made a sign to me to pass the horse-gear in to his hiding-place; and we hid it and ourselves in the thickest of the undergrowth, where we lay quiet for about an hour, while the soldiers rifled the dead bodies of everything of any value that was on them, and examined the captured horses, turning adrift the worst of them. Two men strolled down together to take a look at my chestnut, which was tied to a tree not far from where we were hidden, and one remarked to the other that the horse was not good for much, but that the halter and lasso were worth taking. He took them accordingly, letting the horse go loose; but, contrary to my expectation, the animal, instead of galloping away, only moved a few steps, and then began to feed again quietly; so that as soon as the party had drawn together and marched, Fitzgerald and I emerged cautiously from our hiding-place,

and found no difficulty in catching him; then we girthed a saddle on to him, and I mounted, Fitzgerald jumping up behind me, and directing my course through the wood. We were both anxious enough to leave such a scene of horror; and carefully turning away our faces from the ghastly remains of our entertainers of the night before, we went crashing at a gallop through the under-wood, the chestnut going as willingly and strongly under the double load as he had done under my weight alone on the previous day.

We arrived at our destination in the course of the morning, without any further adventure; and the welcome I received went far towards making up for the disagreeables I had encountered on the road; but I shall not easily forget my first ride in South America.

WILLIAM BEWICK.

WHEN William Bewick, the painter, was born in the work-a-day north-country town of Darlington, in 1795, it was as unlikely a place as could be found for the development of artistic tastes. It contained only one print-shop, with meagre specimens of pictures and prints; it was utterly devoid of decorative art; and the inhabitants would have highly disapproved of any such concession to worldliness, if it had existed, for they only admired worldliness in the shape of an inordinate love of money. Darlington was a 'Quaker town' in those days, and this was its social aspect: 'The love of making and accumulating money was the ruling passion, and every elegant accomplishment was suppressed with studied perseverance. The god Mammon flapped his drab-coloured wings over the little town, and the drama closed its scenic arena. Sock and buskin were contemptuously huddled beyond the precincts, and sent out of the place, as though it were criminal to represent on the stage the follies, the passions, the virtues, and the vices of mankind. Shakspeare's works were banished from the public library, and the novels of Sir Walter Scott subsequently shared the same fate. Dancing was to be decidedly discountenanced, as tending to bring young people together for no good. Poetry was described as a false jingle of words, wherein truth and sense were often perverted for the sake of the rhyme. Music was pronounced a great waste of profitable time; indulgence in the fine arts, time and talents spent with no desirable result. He only was said to be "getting on in the world" who was increasing his property, as if nothing but gold were gain. The man whose gains were known to be rapidly increasing was not only spoken of by the multitude under their breath with veneration, but, as if he more nearly approached creative power than any human being, he was said to be *making money*, and then eulogy was exhausted; he was considered to be crowned with all praise. To live in my native town,' says Mr Bewick, in his autobiographical sketch, '* was to live in the very temple

* *Life and Letters of William Bewick (Artist).* By Thomas Landseer, A.R.A. Hurst & Blackett.

of Mammon; and it was impossible to see the god worshipped daily, to stand in his presence, and behold the reverence he inspired, without catching the contagion of awe. The worship of the beautiful and good found no place there, for "from the least of them even to the greatest, nearly every one was given to covetousness."

In this unlikely soil was grown an artist of eminence—a man of highly cultivated tastes, of romantic and poetical feelings, destined to have a wide acquaintance with all the men of his time best worth knowing, and intimate association with the most gifted and famous among them. A certain 'Aunt Sarah,' who lived near Barnard Castle, was a great friend and godsend to the eager, refined, and imaginative boy, whose mother, a beautiful Quakeress, had a notion that he was rather out of the common, and a secret ambition to secure to him a career which Darlington would have regarded as the abomination of desolation. Aunt Sarah had a romantic mind, and a house full of works of art of a heterogeneous description, and various degrees of merit; but such as they were, they fed the boy's imagination, and supplied the only means of cultivation for his tastes within his reach. Aunt Sarah was a charming creature, the sort of woman Sir Walter would have described to perfection; with a chivalrous turn of mind, and a highly poetic character; full of imagination, which was never suffered to interfere with the fulfilment of the most ordinary domestic duties, while it lent depth and tenderness to her domestic affections. The boy passed delightful days with her, seeking for wild-flowers in the woods which surround the once famous and stately Barnard Castle; or exploring the ruins, while she pointed out tower and pinnacle, dungeon, keep, and subterranean cavern, and above all, the secret passages, which were supposed to communicate for miles underground with Raby, Athelston, or Rokeby. She would point to Baliol's and Brackenbury's Towers, mysteriously hinting at the cruelties of former times; my lady's chamber, and the Duke of Gloucester's state apartments, with his arms carved in the bay-window, still to be seen.

Aunt Sarah's own house was a complete museum of antiquities and curiosities, and her chairs had 1342 carved upon their venerable but uncomfortable backs. The boy's first night's rest in an antique chamber old enough to have housed crook-backed Richard himself, decided his future. He tells the story thus: 'On waking in the morning, the light of day revealed to me this ancient chamber; and straight before me, over the mantel-piece, there hung a half-length portrait the size of life, representing a beautiful lady, looking right down upon me, with an arch Cupid by her side; the little god and herself portrayed as divinities, as was the fashion of a certain period. And what attracted my young observation was that, as I moved, the eyes of the picture seemed to follow me. This strange illusion I could not account for at the time; but I climbed upon a table to ascertain if the eyes were part of the canvas or not; and sure enough, my astonishment was

increased by finding the surface flat and perfect, and only painted over like the rest of the picture. On frequently resuming my examination of this work of art since the period above alluded to, I have always been charmed with the colouring of the flesh, the purity, and bloom, and richness of which seemed to me unsurpassed by Titian. I have no memory of the other pictures or objects in this room. The effect of this beautiful picture, its harmony and glow of colour, was to charm my young fancy. My soul yearned towards the possibility of being able to realise such perfection, and painting became from that time the load-star of my ambition.'

The boy had the smallest possible opportunities for learning the principles of the art he loved, but he made the very most of them. The Quaker schoolmaster supplied his pupils with 'copies' in the shape of coloured engravings, and left the copying of them to the pupils' discretion. William Bewick's father was an upholsterer, and his son was early taken from school, and put to the business, with almost a similar result to that which attended the persevering attempts which were made to turn Gibson, the heaven-born sculptor, into a cabinet-maker. William Bewick was more patient than Gibson; but he stole all the time he could, early in the morning and late at night, to employ it in landscape and portrait painting, to the alarm of his father, who foresaw nothing but ruin in this terrible preference for art over upholstery; and to the delight and pride of his beautiful mother, who would exhibit his portfolios to her friends, amid a chorus of praise and prophecy of his future greatness and fortune. The part of the country in which Bewick lived was famous for a peculiar breed of cattle, of which tremendous specimens, extraordinary mountains of fat, made the tour of the three kingdoms; and as paintings of these bovine wonders were fashionable, the young artist applied himself to taking the portraits of these monsters; the most illustrious of the bulls, heifers, and oxen. He also executed sets of fox-hunting and greyhound coursing, large views of the lakes, the scenery of Wales, the picturesque rivers, and fine seats. Soon a poor painter came to the neighbourhood, who was not only poor on his own account, but because he had had an unfortunate weakness for lending money to Morland, of whom he said, 'whenever he went to Morland for the restitution of his accumulated debts he always left him with an addition to the sum due; but yet he loved him, and was charmed with his society;' and William Bewick took surreptitious lessons from this professor. He was succeeded by a gentleman who, having failed as an actor, gave instruction in water-colours. By this time the youth was seventeen years old, and his portfolios were portentous in size and number; so he turned to a higher branch of that which he was resolved was to be his profession, and became wholly absorbed in the study and practice of oil-painting, 'the smell of which,' he says, 'was to me aliment and perfume inexpressible.'

In those days of eight-horse wagons and stage-coaches, there were no establishments to supply artists' colours from the shops in London, and Bewick had to resort for all the appliances of his art, and for the loan of an easel and palette, to one of the 'Dick Tinto' fraternity. This man, whose name was George Marks, was a very singular and

interesting personage, and a strange sample of unrecognised genius. His quondam pupil and customer describes him after a graphic fashion. 'He was at once house, sign, coach, and heraldry painter; while for all who might be pleased to patronise his graphic pencil, he ventured upon the higher departments of art, landscape, or portraits, as well as the luminous displays called "transparencies," painted upon a system of glazing of the Venetian school. He made up his own materials, and ground his own colours. He was scientific as well as everything else; there was nothing of which he did not know something, his acquirements being indeed extraordinary. Self-taught and unappreciated, he lived and died a recluse, known but to few: his acquisitions of information were scarcely known to himself; it was only when subjects were brought under discussion that he found himself prepared to enter on subtle arguments and nice distinctions that would have surprised and delighted learned professors. Like many unfortunate geniuses, he was eccentric in person and manners. He was decidedly a bookworm, and when poring over some mouldy old tome, he wore a pair of wide-rimmed spectacles, partly horn, partly metal. He combined many pursuits: he was by trade bookbinder, birdstuffer, botanist, herbalist, geologist, mineralogist, geographer, astronomer, surveyor, engraver; his closets and shelves were crammed with tools, instruments, books, portfolios full of old prints of all descriptions and sizes, stuffed birds and animals, an eccentric collection of branches, and clogs, and stumps of trees, with mosses and lichens; walls covered with pictures all painted by himself, besides his slabs and millers, easels and colours, oils and varnishes.' This singular personage received the young aspirant with enthusiastic sympathy, initiated him into the mysteries of 'oil,' the secrets of 'glazing,' and urged him, unnecessarily, to unremitting hard work. They were kindred spirits, and the boy's perseverance was indomitable.

During his frequent visits to his strange friend, William Bewick used to hear him read the descriptions and critiques about paintings and artists which constituted a leading feature at that time of the *Examiner* newspaper. Thus he became familiar with the names of living artists, with their works, and the peculiarities of their style. 'It was by this paper,' says the painter, 'I was informed about the extraordinary wonders of the "Elgin Marbles," the doings of artists in the great metropolis, and all the interesting particulars of the art of this period. Is it to be wondered at if my too sanguine imagination was fired, and my desire painfully excited to see the works of the men of whom I was constantly reading?' It was certainly not surprising that, at twenty, young Bewick finally abandoned the upholstery business, and betook himself to London, a country youth, in a modest suit of brown, with twenty pounds in his pocket, earned by his brush: all he could call his own, for his father believed in business, and did not believe in art, and told him, if he persisted in following the desire of his heart, he was to expect no assistance from him. He tells the story with a touching plainness not devoid of grace. 'London appeared to my youthful imagination decked in dazzling beauty, especially when a journey of three long days and nights by a stage-coach lay between me and my heaven of bliss. So it was fifty years ago, when the *Wellington*

stopped at my father's door, and I quitted my indulgent home for ever. Silent and simple I travelled, with visions alternately sad and brilliant flitting before me. Everything was strange to my wondering eyes. As the coach entered the suburbs of the great city in a heavy shower of rain, I was warned not to take my impressions of London from that day, for with the dense smoke and wet it seemed as if we were entering into an inhabited cloud. Alas! how was I situated! I had no introductions, no friends, not even an acquaintance, in the whirlpool of life that I was entering. I had come against the wishes of at least one parent, contrary to the advice of friends, who would come to tell my father of the risks and ruin of young men indulging in visionary pursuits, and urge him, as he loved his son, to induce him to return home and turn his talents to business.'

William Bewick was one of the fortunate few who have made so hazardous a choice, and have not had reason to regret it. He had difficulties at first, but he surmounted them, by the aid of zealous and efficient friends, and his own talent and industry. He became a pupil of Haydon's, and incurred some of the animosity which pursued that unfortunate man; but it did not last. He wrote most intelligent letters to his brother and sister, full of charming anecdotes of all the celebrities of the day in literature and art. He had a severe fit of the young artist's passion for big pictures, and was very ambitious, but always simple, affectionate, unaffected, and pious. David and Goliath, Rachel and Jacob, and similar grandiose subjects, were among his earliest noticeable productions. He possessed considerable facility in writing, and a talent for close and accurate observation, and he committed most of his impressions concerning men and events to paper, so that his reminiscences are full, lively, and interesting. His portraiture of Haydon, with the significant heading—

But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And all that thou hast done for me,

is admirable in every sense; and his comparative description of Ugo Foscolo and Wordsworth is in a fine and sparkling style. As an essayist, Bewick would have taken a high place in literature if he had made it his profession. Hazlitt, for whom he had an immense admiration, infected him slightly with his own grandiloquence, but it did not last. There is wonderful variety in his letters and sketches; hardly a name of importance is wanting in them. Hazlitt was subject to fits of absence of mind, which sometimes led to fortunate results, as in Bewick's case, for through the critic's forgetfulness, the artist had the happiness of making the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott, without whose portrait his gallery would have been incomplete. This was in the time when the author of *Waverley* was called 'The Great Unknown.' Bewick had the good fortune to see him in the privacy of his domestic and home life; and the picture he draws of Abbotsford, of the guests assembled there, and of Sir Walter's friendly hospitality, is remarkably attractive. The great story-teller, at his own tea-table, reciting old Border minstrelsy to his guests, is most vividly depicted. Sir Walter gave Bewick permission to make a drawing of a painting of the head of Queen Mary, at Abbotsford—a most interesting picture, representing the head immediately

after the queen's execution, painted by Annus Cawood, and dated: 'Fotheringay, 9th February 1587.' The head appears to be represented on a silver salver, covered with black crape; and Sir Walter told Mr Bewick that the room where the body lay after execution was locked up for three days, and it was supposed the painting was done during that time. The artist was hospitably entertained, and met several pleasant people—among them, Dr Hughes of St Paul's, and his wife, Canon Barham's correspondent. 'To see the great story-teller,' says the artist, 'seated on a low ottoman by the fire, the lowliest of the party, conversing in his humorous way with the simplicity peculiar to him, appeared to me delightful. His stores of anecdote, historic ballads, legends, and exciting stories seemed to be inexhaustible; and as he told them with suitable expression of mystery, awe, wonder, or surprise, he would chuckle, and enjoy the effect he produced upon his hearers. Amused, too, he seemed, as he observed Mrs Hughes ever and anon busy with a small note-book, in which she jotted down words and memoranda, that, we may suppose, would be written out at length after she retired. When a quaint old Scotch ballad was repeated, she had some difficulty in following the recital, and asked Sir Walter to indulge her again. He said: 'Never mind that now, Mrs Hughes; I will take care to write it out for you in the morning;' and at breakfast the promised transcript was handed over, with the observation: 'There, Mrs Hughes, is what you wished; I have not forgotten you.' Mr Bewick describes Sir Walter's recitation of the pathetic old ballad, *Sir Patrick Spence*, as 'a low, mournful kind of recitative, peculiar, I presume, to poets or minstrels, as I never heard the harmonious chant from any other persons. Memory takes me back to the sonorous, tremulous, prolonged, and melancholy sound of the poet's voice as he uttered the last two fatal lines:

And there lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet,

when the hearers hung with tearful attention upon the sensitive lips which trembled with emotion.'

His account of a second visit to Abbotsford is full of interest. When he had become quite famous as a copyist, Mr Bewick visited Ireland, and made the acquaintance of every person of note. Nothing could be more spirited than his narrative of this tour. He had an ardent desire to visit Italy; and in 1824, when he was well known, and 'making money,' as they said in his native town, where he had a great reputation, he realised his wish. Sir Thomas Lawrence sent him to Italy, to copy Michael Angelo's Prophets and Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, and he took his bride with him. To this journey, which was a great success in every way, we owe a charming collection of letters, in which art, literature, foreign scenes, men, and manners are treated of in a liberal spirit and a lively tone. Thenceforth, Mr Bewick passed a great deal of time abroad; but he made Darlington his home, and there he always found large occupation for his pencil, for everybody in that part of the world who could afford it considered it his duty to have his portrait painted by Bewick, or to have his walls adorned with some specimen of his handiwork; thus proving that

Darlington had discarded its old prejudices, and learned that there was something admirable besides money. Before long, the artist was enabled to retire from painting as a profession; but he loved and practised his art as long as he lived. His life, which closed in 1866, was a happy and prosperous one, and he was a thoroughly satisfactory specimen of the 'self-made man.'

FOOD ECONOMISERS.

THE man who makes two ears of corn grow where only one grew before, is very justly held to be a benefactor of his kind. With equal justice may we include in the list of such benefactors all those who, by their skill and inventive genius, aid in improving and economising the food of the community. Creative power must, in fact, be called in, in most cases, to effect economisation of food; so that there is no real distinction to be drawn between the man who adds to the human store by growing more, and him who increases that store by diminishing its waste. That much is wasted, and will, we fear, continue to be wasted, from sheer carelessness and lavish indifference, is only too true. But ignorance is the most fruitful cause of waste—ignorance which leads mankind to persevere in wasteful methods of preparing their food; while a knowledge of improved modes of cookery would add immensely to the health and comfort of the human family, and increase to an enormous extent the material wealth of the world.

The accomplished M. Soyer, writing at the time of the Crimean War, remarks that almost all the productions of nature can be made available, and produce wholesome and nutritious food for man. But this admirable cook, and really clever scientific man, goes on to shew how essential knowledge is to the attainment of the benefits nature so liberally provides, but which are so woefully wasted by adherence to old methods of preparing food. M. Soyer himself did much to reform the waste of which he complained, more especially by the improvements which he introduced in the cookery for the army and navy of this country, and which he also extended to our public institutions. That there was great need for this improvement may well be admitted if we are to credit M. Soyer's assertion, that by the system of cooking then in general use, more than fifty per cent., or one-half of all animal and vegetable productions, were lost; and that the loss was aggravated by the food, generally, being so much less palatable than it ought to be. He mentions instances where, in some charitable institutions, the plan adopted was to cut one hundred pounds of meat into pieces of a quarter of a pound each, to put these pieces into one hundred gallons of water at twelve o'clock of one day, and boil them till twelve the next day, in order to form a soup for the inmates and patients. By this mode of proceeding, the osmazome, that is, the real nutriment of the meat, was lost by evaporation from the boiler; and only the gelatine and fibrine were left. A medical Board, instituted at Paris for the purpose of inquiring into the subject, proved that gelatine contained no nutriment whatever, and that the fibrine contained about the same as a piece of dry wood. In short, as M. Soyer sums up the matter, it was much the same as if a cook put a piece of meat of a few

pounds weight before a large fire to roast for twenty-four hours.

By the ordinary methods of cooking now pursued, that is, by roasting before the common fire, boiling in the common stew-pans, and using the ordinary oven, the waste is far beyond what most people can be aware of, and the result is not half so satisfactory as those who have tried improved methods know to be attainable. In roasting meat in the common way, the loss is one-third of the original weight, or $5\frac{1}{2}$ ounces in the pound. Boiled meat loses $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces in the pound; while baked meat shews a loss of only $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces in the pound. Confining our remarks to butcher-meat only, we beg the reader to bear in mind that though there are some parts of Britain where a considerable portion of the population taste but very little of butcher-meat from one year's end to another, the consumption is, nevertheless, something enormous, and the amount of money to be saved by avoiding waste is really startling. From the known quantity of butcher-meat that enters the London market, it is easily calculable that the average quantity consumed by each man, woman, and child in the metropolis must be about seven ounces each per day; while the average for all England is calculated at about five ounces per head per day. If even fifteen per cent. of the waste on this enormous quantity of meat can be saved by improved cooking—and a greater saving than that can be effected—we arrive at results which cannot be too generally known. Captain F. P. Warren, of the royal navy, as our public authorities and scientific men in general are well aware, has done wonders by the introduction of his Patent Cooking-pot—now greatly used both in our land and naval forces—and by which, while the flavour of the food is improved, the saving of waste amounts to full fifteen per cent. Now, as Captain Warren has shewn, were this saving to be universal in this country, we should, assuming the average price of butcher-meat to be eightpence per pound, the consumption to be no more than four ounces per head, and the population to be 30,000,000, effect a money saving of no less than £11,000,000 per annum—enough of itself to defray the whole cost of our navy.

But it is by improved methods of cooking by gas that we are to look for the greatest saving in the future, for here we shall save not only in food, but in fuel. The adaptation of gas for the purposes of boiling, stewing, or frying is simple enough, and is in common use both in public and private establishments. The great difficulty heretofore has been to adapt gas so as to roast meat in a cleanly, economical, and satisfactory manner. In fact, it cannot fairly be said that meat has yet been properly roasted at all by any apparatus hitherto in use, as none of them have fulfilled the essential condition of having round the meat a free current of air, whereby all offensive fumes are carried off, and a genuine *roast* is effected. The difficulty just alluded to has, we think, been completely overcome by the adoption of an entirely new principle to gas-cooking. A new gas 'Roaster,' as it is called, is exhibited in the International Exhibition now open at Kensington, and which is marked in the catalogue as Southby's patent. Instead of the old plan of rows of gas jets above which the meat was placed, and from which it too often acquired unpleasant odours from

imperfect combustion, which created a prejudice against gas-cooking—this new apparatus exhibits only one gas-burner, placed at one end of the frame-work, and standing quite clear of the food to be roasted. The burner is enclosed in an iron chimney, above which the flame is not allowed to come. When the gas is lighted, a light iron cover (the cover of the specimen in the Exhibition is of porcelain) is placed over, and encloses the chimney, the end of the cover farthest from the gas resting on the edge of the stand, and allowing free outlet to the heated air within. It will be seen that the principle upon which this roaster acts is, that the heated air from the burner ascends at once to the top of the cover, proceeds to the cool end, descends to the cooler outside air by the raised edge, and thus a free current is effected, which is said to be greater even than is obtained by roasting at an open fire. As an enormous quantity of fresh air impinges on the gas jet, the combustion of the gas is rendered absolute, so that no smell or extraneously unpleasant taste can impregnate the meat. We can speak from experience that meat cooked by this apparatus is as perfect as can ever be attained by the best open fire cooking in the most skilled hands. The juices are all retained in the meat, which secures its being tender, full of flavour, and consequently in the most digestible condition. The loss of weight by cooking is reduced to a minimum, for, whereas a joint of meat of eleven pounds weight loses *less* than three pounds by cooking at an open fire, the loss by this gas-roaster, on a joint of the weight above mentioned, is reduced to only one pound. Owing to the complete consumption of the gas, aided by the consumable parts of the common air which rushes in to feed it, the cost of cooking is so markedly lessened, that such a joint as we have just described can be perfectly cooked at a cost not exceeding one penny. From what has just been stated, it will be seen that at the least a most important and valuable improvement has been effected. As money may be saved, comfort promoted, and health improved by accepting the aid of science as a hand-maiden in the everyday but absolutely needful operation of preparing food, we have thought it a matter of duty to draw attention to the subject.

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER III.—ACROSS THE WAY.

NATURE, as I have said, had cast my twin cousins, with the exception of sex, in the same mould. They were as like as peas—dried peas, for their swarthiness had the withered and yellow look which so often belongs to the Asiatic. Their voices were so similar, that it was impossible for the ear alone to decide who spoke; and even their hand-writings defied the eye to discern that of the brother from that of the sister. Their mutual affection was, moreover, such, that they loved one another as themselves, and this bond united them more closely than the natural ligament that bound together the Siamese twins. And yet, curiously enough, we soon discovered that their dispositions were as opposite as the poles. Cecil's nature was impulsive, generous, and candid; that of his sister, secretive, proud, and unconciliatory. Even Aunt

Ben, with whom (though she had her prejudices) no human being had ever yet contrived to quarrel, confessed that she could not 'get on' with Cousin Jane. Kindness had no power to impress her, and of course only kindness was tried. At nineteen, she resembled one of those cast-iron spinsters of fifty, who regard even children with a stony stare, and reserve their affections for a cat or a dog, and when they die, leave all their money to forward distant missionary enterprise. It was touching to observe the efforts made by her brother to mitigate (for her own sake, for she was never harsh to him) the repulsive harshness of her manner, to bring warmth into her cold looks, and when all was to no purpose, to excuse her failings (as he tenderly imagined them) to others; her health had suffered, he said, from the change of climate; but we never knew her to ail.

Though the faces of my cousins were duplicates, the expression which their respective characters had evoked in each was very different. In Jane's case, plainness was so intensified by ill-humour, that she was downright ugly; in Cecil's, plainness was so mitigated by cheerfulness, that he was almost comely. The intelligence of both was very considerable; but here the advantage lay on the other side. Jane had taken every opportunity that India had afforded—and there had been no stint to Uncle Tom's provision for them in the way of education—to improve her mind; whereas the ignorance of Cecil was something stupendous. It is quite possible for even a clever boy to emerge from a great public school in England, after half-a-dozen years' devotion to its so-called studies, with the merest smattering of Greek and Latin, and a total absence of information about any other subject whether of use or interest; but Cecil had gone through his Calcutta curriculum as a wild-duck dives through the water and comes up again—if not absolutely dry, yet scarcely damp. Nothing, really nothing, remained about him to evince that he had been to school at all, unless I may except a passion for private theatricals, an amusement to which, it seems, the schoolboys of India are (or were) much devoted. He had a good memory, was an excellent mimic, and had a passion for what children call 'dressing-up,' that in one of his years was rather ridiculous. His attachment to my father, with whom, as indeed with all of us, he soon became a great favourite, led him to look into that Elizabethan treasure-house, in which the former so delighted; and though, doubtless, he missed what was best, he caught much of its humour, and reproduced it to admiration. I shall never forget him (all unconscious of plagiarism from Pistol), attired in full eastern costume, addressing our astonished cook in the sonorous words of Tamberlaine, and threatening the good soul with instant decapitation, as 'a pampered jade of Asia.' Singularly enough, considering his oriental extraction, he was far from slothful; very strong and active, and delighting in all out-door exercise. The use of a leaping-pole was, when he came to us, as unknown to him as

the rest of the sciences, but, on the other hand, he took to it with avidity. My own high-flying expeditions had caused, as I have said, some little excitement in the neighbourhood; but that sank into insignificance compared with the wonder aroused by the feats of Cousin Cecil. Being in his novitiate, he was not, of course, so skilful a performer as myself; but his pluck was marvellous, and his conceptions, so to speak—his ideas of what was practicable—sublime. More audacious than the philosopher who only required a standing-point in order to move the world, he made light of even that mechanical difficulty. From a hedge-top, from a quaking bog, from a slippery house-roof, he would hurl himself through space with ambitious aim, and the most supreme indifference to the result.

It was not to be wondered at that the astonished villagers who beheld this flying portent of swarthy hue, associated him in their minds with the Prince of the Powers of the Air, and called him 'our Gatcombe Devil.' Somehow or other, his sister got to hear of this, and it annoyed her extremely: she expressed her opinion that all such contumelious persons should be taken up and whipped; and when we laughed at the idea of such wholesale punishment, she was offended. As a matter of fact, Cecil was popular with everybody; his frankness and freedom from pride made their way to all hearts; nor, doubtless, were the reckless feats, which won him so disrespectful a misname, without their charms. It was when he had been with us a few months, that a circumstance occurred in connection with this pastime—apparently so innocent and unimportant—that was fated to affect his future fortunes, and those of all of us, in no small degree: on such slight branches of the tree of life do great fruits hang.

Our excursion on the day in question had been extended beyond its usual limits, to Wayford, an outlying hamlet of our village, through which the river Way ran; and, indeed, it was the goodly breadth of that stream which had attracted us thither. Beside the Mississippi, or even the Thames, its proportions would doubtless have seemed small enough; but then we proposed to fly over it. The autumn was far advanced, and nature wore that pathetic look of beauty which is peculiar to that epoch—the same quiet grace of farewell that is sometimes seen in the faces of the dying. The wind, even on the sand-cliff, did but whisper, and when we descended into the vale, was hushed. There was no sound in the moist air except that of the stream, that seemed to sorrow for the loss of summer, as it swept the banks no longer pranked with flowers. Its broadest part ran through an apple-orchard, the scanty leaves of which, like tempted innocence, were blushing before their fall. Between this orchard and the sand-cliff was a small cottage, the tenants of which were Ruth and Richard Waller—a sister and brother, who, having lost their parents in early youth, had contrived to keep the same home, and support themselves, though perhaps the youngest couple that ever adventured housekeeping. They were still young, not even being of age; but Richard dug for the scythe-stone, and that deadly

toil had already affected his health. Ruth, too, performed that share of the work which usually fell to the lot of Gatcombe women. We could hear across the stream, as we drew near, that chipping of the stone, which might have been likened to the graving of her own epitaph, so sure was it, if persisted in, in the end to prove her doom. At present, however, to judge by her looks, the nature of her toil had in no way injured her. Hearing our voices, she came to the cottage door, shading her eyes with her hand against the sun, and I thought I never beheld a fairer picture. She was rather over the middle height, and of a most graceful figure; her complexion was as fair as though it had never been exposed to out-door influences; and her fine brown hair shone in the sunlight like bright threads of gold. It is curious enough that though large eyes are preferred to small ones, there is a certain charm in eyes half-shut beyond any attraction they possess when open. True, there is a mechanical necessity in the former case to smile; but independently of that pleasant accompaniment, the glance shot through half-closed lids is one of the deadliest weapons in Beauty's armoury. In the present instance, it clove a heart to the centre.

'How are you, Rue?' said I, for we had known one another all our lives, though, from Wayford being so far from the Manor-house, we seldom met.

'Nicely, thank you, Master Fred.—I hope the Squire and Miss Benita are in good health.'

'How is your brother Richard?'

'Well, sir, he is but so-so. He is working in the cliff, you know,' she added, as if that was explanation enough of his not being in rude health.

'And you, Rue, you are doing almost as bad,' said I rebukefully. 'I wish you'd let me bring you one of Aunt Benita's masks; but there—I daresay you would be too conceited to wear one.'

'Too beautiful rather, much too beautiful,' murmured Cecil's voice at my elbow; his dark eyes gazing upon her with undisguised admiration, his dusky features aglow with delight.

'My cousin Cecil says you are too beautiful,' cried I aloud: at which, with a rosy blush, Rue vanished within doors.

'Now all's dark,' quoted Cecil, from one of my father's favourites, and with the full meaning of the author in his deep tones too. He was not angry at my mischievous repetition of his late remark; I think, on the contrary, he was pleased that the girl should have heard what he thought of her marvellous charms.

'Well, let's have the light again,' said I, laughing.—'Rue! Rue! do come out and shew us where there is firm footing: we are going to leap the stream.'

She came out at once, and warned us that the river was very deep just there.

'Pray, don't attempt it, Master Fred., or the folks will say I helped to break your neck. It is shallower and narrower above yonder; and the banks are not so high.'

But it was the height of the bank at that particular spot which in reality made the project feasible. Between us and the cottage lay a miniature Alpine ravine, which I had little doubt of being able to clear, if only the pole were long enough to reach the bottom of it. As for Cecil,

he would have essayed to leap Niagara, even if Ruth Waller had not been waiting for him on the other side of the Falls.

I examined with care the ground which sloped down to the brink of the stream: it was moist and slippery. 'We can't take any run at it,' said I doubtfully; 'it must be a standing jump.'

'All right,' said Cecil carelessly, his eyes still rapt on the beautiful girl, who, on her part, was watching us with the utmost interest. 'I'm game.'

'I've no doubt of that,' said I, laughing; 'but you'll be dead game, if you don't take care what you are about: there isn't half a foot of pole to spare, and if it breaks—— Upon my life, Cecil, I don't like it,' whispered I; 'one wants a fir-tree for such a span as this.'

'Don't ye, don't ye try it, Master Fred,' cried Rue appealingly, and perceiving my hesitation. 'You talk of the rashness of us poor people; but we work at our ill trade for our bread, whereas it's sinful to run such a risk as that for pleasure and'—

'If you are afraid, Fred., let me go,' said Cecil quietly. 'Why, after all, it's only a ducking at the worst.'

I knew very well that a ducking might not be the worst of it, but my cousin's taunt determined me at once to make the attempt; moreover, despite her entreaties, there was a flush of colour in Ruth Waller's face which shewed how deeply she was interested in the performance of the feat, and I did not like to disappoint the village beauty. The words of the heralds in the lists of Ashby occurred to me with ludicrous application to my position: 'Love of ladies, death of champions, splintering of lances! Stand forth, gallant knights; fair eyes look upon your deeds!' If the lance *should* splinter in the present case, it was not impossible that the death of the champion might ensue; but still I did stand forth, and looked as gallant as I could under the circumstances. First, then, I went through the somewhat unknighly performance of moistening the palms of my hands; then I grasped the top of the pole, the iron-shod end of which was already firmly placed in the stream; swayed backward and forward once or twice, drew in my breath, and finally launched myself into the air. It seemed to me that I took a long time to get across; the momentum was only just sufficient to throw the pole on the other side; and in the middle, I distinctly felt it 'hang,' the effect of which, had the retardation been maintained, would have been to make me circle round the pole, like a toy monkey, and then drop in the river. But the good pole carried me safe over, and almost into Ruth's arms.

'Eh, but you are a gay fine lipper, Master Fred.!' said she with enthusiasm, as I stood panting, and perhaps a little proud, by her side.

It was now Cecil's turn to try his luck. I had great doubts—though, of course, I did not express them—of his safe arrival at our side of the Way. He was not, as I have already mentioned, so skilful in the management of the pole as myself; while I, for my part, had never made a more difficult leap. It was not his habit, however, to lose much time in preparation, and over he came like a rocket—that is, he came about half-way over. When he got so far, there was a splintering crash, which made my blood curdle, for it told me that the pole had given way, which is the great danger of deep leaping. If he should come down upon the broken

piece, it might spit him like a lark, and this was just what he had done; and though, happily, he fell aslant upon it, the shock was so painful and violent, that it forced a sharp cry from his lips, which the next instant was stifled in the stream. Quick as a bird, Ruth flew down the steep steps that led from the cottage to the river's brink, and caught him by his clothes as the current swirled him by. Except that he was wetted to the skin, the ducking had done him no harm; but when he had struggled to his feet, we saw that his face was pale, and that he pressed his hand against his side, as though in pain.

'You are hurt?' said I anxiously.
'No, no; it's nothing,' said Cecil, who had been thanking Ruth in a faint voice. 'I'm a little bruised, that's all. I can't walk very well. I think I should be better if I could sit down a while;' and he looked towards the cottage.

'Do, pray, sir, come in,' said Ruth. 'But you'll catch your death in those wet clothes. Perhaps you wouldn't mind wearing Richard's Sunday suit, while I dry them before the fire?'

This offer was gratefully accepted; and I took Cecil at once up to Richard Waller's room, and helped him to change his attire. This was accomplished with great difficulty, for my cousin's breathing seemed much oppressed; and when he caught sight of himself in the little glass in corduroys and a red waistcoat, and would fain have burst out laughing, the attempt appeared to give him great pain.

'I tell you what, Cecil,' said I decisively, 'there's something wrong with your ribs. I'll leave you here under Ruth's care, and fetch Dr Cherwell; and if he's not in, I'll at all events bring the pony-carriage from the Manor-house, for it's clear you can't walk home.'

I expected opposition to this plan, for Cecil hated to be made a fuss with—even his sister's demonstrative solicitude about his health, and the dangers of pole-leaping, vexed him; but, to my great relief, he gave none; so off I started on my errand, leaving Ruth in charge of him. In those days I could run like the deer; but it was a long way to the doctor's, and when I reached his house, he was away on his professional round; then, there was a mile or two more to the Manor; and the groom was not at the stables, so I had to put the pony in the shafts myself, for I did not wish to alarm the household, by letting them know why I wanted the carriage. I had accomplished my task with privacy, and was driving at a canter down the avenue, when, to my great confusion, I met Cousin Jane. She stopped me at once, and with a swift suspicious glance, inquired whither I was going. 'I thought you were out with Cecil,' said she. 'Where is he?'

I told her the plain truth. He had met with an accident; there was nothing serious, but he was bruised, so that walking gave him pain; and I was taking the pony-trap to bring him home.

'You will bring him home dead,' cried she vehemently, the fire glittering in her dark eyes; 'and then you will get his money, and be satisfied.'
'Jane!' cried I, in astonishment that knew no bounds. 'What on earth do you mean? You must be stark mad!'

'I was,' said she, controlling herself by a great effort. 'Forgive me, Cousin Fred. I am sane now. I am sure that you love my brother, and would

rather have him grow up and be happy, than reap any benefit at his expense. You have no selfish thoughts, as some have. Pray, forgive me.'

She stepped lightly into the carriage, and seating herself by my side, laid her hand upon mine, and patted it, as though it were the head of a child.

'I forgive you, of course, Jane,' said I, withdrawing from this caress; 'but how is it possible for me to forget such words? What selfish thoughts do you refer to, and who are those that entertain them? If you mean my father and Aunt Ben—and I know of no one else to whom you can possibly refer—I can answer for their never having harboured a base thought, even in their dreams. They would not speculate upon your brother's death for all the filthy dross that was ever picked up in India.'

How angry I was, and how I hated that yellow girl, who squatted beside me like a toad!

'You are shocked and ashamed of me, Cousin Fred,' said she penitently; 'and I deserve it.'

This I did not deny, but flicked the pony with the whip, and drove on rapidly through the village. When we had cleared it, and were cantering along the noiseless sand-road that ran round the foot of the cliff, Jane began to speak again, with great slowness and precision, like a secretary of some mercantile community making his statement in committee assembled.

'In my terror upon Cecil's account, Frederick, and in my anger too, for you know how I have always opposed this leaping, that has now turned out so ill, I said the first thing that came to my lips. It was never harboured in my thoughts at all; upon my word, it was not.'

'I think we had better drop the subject,' said I drily.

'As you please, Frederick,' was the humble reply; 'but do not imagine that I have not been punished.' She said this with such obvious mental pain, that I really pitied her.

We began to talk of Cecil's accident, and where I had left him, and the like; and she was all calmness and content.

'I am quite sure you did the best for him, poor fellow, that could be done. I daresay it will turn out that he has only a few bruises, which will have no other effect than to make him more cautious. Even a broken rib is not very serious.—My dear cousin, who is that horrible man?'

This ejaculation was caused by the appearance of poor Batty—as Bartholomew Cade, the harmless idiot of the village, was called. He had worked in his childhood in the sand-cliff; and a sudden fall of earth had deprived him of his senses, and left him only instincts, one of which was, unhappily, for drink. He had just arrived from the terrace on the road in front of us, by his usual method of descent, which was to curve himself into a circle, and roll down like a wheel; and there he stood, shaking the sand from his head and limbs by a grotesque rotatory movement that would have added the brains of any sane man. As we drew near, he held out a handful of copper and small silver coins, and laughed exultingly.

'How did you get all that money, Batty?' inquired I, as I drove slowly by, lest his weird antics and appearance should startle the pony.

'Selling props,' cried he—'props, props!'
'I hope you didn't steal them, Batty!' said I gravely.

'No, no; I cut 'em with the bill-hook.'

As we drove on, I explained to Cousin Jane that this poor fellow earned his living by cutting out of the fir-wood the props for the sand-caves, which were bought of him for small sums by the workmen; and how, on one occasion, it had unfortunately struck him that his labour might be saved by taking the props out of the caves, and selling *them*—an idea which, but for the timely discovery of his theft, might have caused great catastrophes.

'I hope he was whipped,' said Cousin Jane tartly, with whom whipping was a panacea for all disorders, mental, moral, and physical.

'Nay,' said I. 'Batty is not responsible for his actions; but he has promised not to misbehave himself in the way of prop-stealing again, and he always keeps his word.'

Perhaps the notion of Batty's getting off so easily, outraged Cousin Jane's strict sense of propriety, but, at all events, for the rest of our drive she became more like her usual self. When we stopped at the end of the little lane which led to the cottage of the Wallers, and which was not practicable for wheels, she jumped out, and hurried on, leaving me to tie up the pony. When I followed, she had not entered the house, but was standing at the open door. I was about to ask her why she did not enter; but she shook her head, and held up her hand for silence. Her face was livid, her breath came in thick gasps, and her thin lips were parted with a grin of rage. I looked over her shoulder at the sight which had evoked these unpleasant symptoms. In that apartment of a Gatecombe cottage which is 'kitchen, and parlour, and all,' sat, all unconscious of our presence, a pair of youthful rustics. The walls were but of plaster, and defaced rather than ornamented by some highly coloured dabs of the story of the Prodigal, and of Ruth amid the corn; on the mantel-piece, art was again travestied in the person of an Infant Samuel, highly gilt, and with black dots for eyes; on the shelves were a few specimens of common delf; the floor was carpetless; and from the roof depended onions; and yet the human objects in this frame redeemed its coarseness, and presented a fair picture—purest pastoral. Pretty Rue, with head aside, and eyes that feigned an interest in the burning logs, was seated by the fire; and close to her—so close that their chairs touched—sat Cecil in the Sunday suit, with his hand pressed to his red waistcoat, like a love-sick Robin. What he was saying I know not, but he was looking encyclopædias of affection.

Jane drew me on one side of the porch, and whispered hoarsely: 'Who is that woman?'

'Only Rue Waller. She pulled him out of the river, and lent him her brother's clothea. You see,' added I mischievously, 'Cecil is not so very much hurt by his accident—unless it induces heart-disease.' Here I gave a premonitory cough, which was followed by the hasty scraping of chairs within; and when we again presented ourselves at the doorway, the young people were on opposite sides of the fireplace. Rue was blushing like a peony; but Cecil's swarthy face did not change its hue (though it was prone to do so on slight occasions), nor move a muscle: in this respect it shewed a striking contrast to its duplicate, for Jane had turned as nearly white as the nature of things permitted.

'I came here understanding that you were hurt, Cecil,' said she, with that distinctness of utterance so significant of pent-up rage. 'But it seems that you only wished to get rid of Frederick.'

'I might have been hurt,' returned Cecil quietly, 'had it not been for kind help and tendance.'

Jane laughed a little laugh that was the concentration of contempt and scorn, and surveyed Ruth—to whom he had pointed, and who stood courtesying humbly, yet with great grace—from head to foot. 'Well,' resumed she, 'you have been tended long enough, I think. Is it not time to have done with your farce—to take off those ridiculous clothes, and come home?'

The duplicate faces became now alike in hue.

'I see nothing ridiculous in the clothes which have been so hospitably lent to me,' said Cecil sharply; 'but I see something very mean and base in jesting at honest people because they happen to be poor.'

There was a most embarrassing pause, during which the young hostess gazed on the fire, and brother and sister confronted one another with looks that they had certainly never interchanged before.

Then 'Ruth,' said Cecil, with a tenderness in his tone that he seemed to exaggerate rather than to attempt to conceal, 'I am greatly obliged to you for your kindness. Your brother's clothes shall be returned to-night, and please to express to him my thanks for the use of them.' He held out his hand, which Rue shyly took, and, as he did so, turned round upon his sister defiantly.

'If you have not your purse with you, Cecil,' said she drily, 'I have mine. You should always remunerate for their trouble honest people who happen to be poor.'

'Indeed, miss,' said Ruth hurriedly—for Jane had already taken out three half-crowns and laid them on the table—'my brother would be very vexed to think that I took money for'—The close of her sentence was lost in a passionate exclamation in Hindustanee; and Cecil snatched up the silver and threw it, through the doorway, into the middle of the river, where the broken pole was still standing. What he said, I know not; but I am sure, from the expression which it evoked on his sister's face, that the Indian tongue is capable of conveying a strong invective; and after his retort, not a syllable of any language, European or Oriental, did Cousin Jane utter during our drive home.

CHAPTER IV.—FELLOW-LABOURERS.

The pains which Cousin Jane took to set herself right, after that unfortunate day's proceedings, with both myself and her brother, were great and intermittent. Directly she had made that speech suggestive of the advantage that would accrue to us at Gatecombe if anything were to happen to Cecil, I saw that she would have given much to have recalled it: she had looked, to use a popular and powerful image, as though she could have bitten her tongue out. Her apology and retraction had followed, as I have said, on the instant; and yet she seemed painfully aware that they had been insufficient. If her insult had been directed to myself, I could perhaps have forgiven her; but the insinuation had been uttered, on her own confession, with reference to my father—the least

self-seeking and mercenary of men—and it had wounded me to the quick. Her keen intelligence perceived this, and her efforts to re-establish herself in my good opinion were made through the very channel in which she had made shipwreck of herself. Her manner towards Uncle Fred. underwent a complete change; she discarded her sullen ways, and endeavoured all she could to adapt herself to his genial mood. She anticipated Aunt Ben in lighting his pipe and cutting his newspaper for him after breakfast; and even took a part in that long established recreation of the household, in which he took such unfeigned pleasure, namely, our Dramatic Readings. Hitherto, she had icily declined to join them, and had sat apart, engaged with pressed lips and knitted brow, over a certain intricate Chinese puzzle, and surrounded with a faint atmosphere of sandal-wood (which I smell now), while Bobadil gave lessons in fence, or Mammon in making money. My father Bowdlerised his favourite plays (by no means a task of supererogation), to suit the drawing-room; and Aunt Ben and Eleanor from the rectory, who formed the female portion of our *dramatis personæ*, were hardly worked, and greatly needed Jane's assistance, thus tardily bestowed. There were no stage jealousies amongst us; and indeed Aunt Ben, for her part, would have gladly thrown up all her engagements in her niece's favour, had she been permitted to do so. The dear old soul once confided to me, that whenever her turn came to declaim or protest, to coquette or plead, she felt like some unhappy whist-player who has got the lead and doesn't want it. She would always have been 'fourth hand,' that is, as far from the leader as possible, and never have won a trick if she could have helped it. Her neighbours on either hand were ever conscious of a melancholy undertone in which she was accustomed to recite her part before it came to her, just as a schoolboy in class occupies himself with his own approaching task, without taking an absorbing interest in the classical renderings of his predecessors. She had the advantage over him, indeed, of being able to calculate to a nicety, and of not being liable to corporal punishment in case of a fiasco, but she had her nervous anxieties nevertheless; and often and often would my father's grave remonstrant tones, 'Now, Benita, Benita!' remind her, like some stroke of doom, that her turn was come, and awaken her to the horrors of her (dramatic) situation. Then would her finger hurriedly retrace some fourteen lines or so of heroic verse, and damp and palpitating, she would depict the woes of Aspatia, and mildly reproach Evadne for having robbed her of her Amintor. Happy for her when Melancholy thus chanced to mark her for her own—when she got a plaintive part in the lot-drawing—and had to recite such dirges as:

*Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;*

for, indeed, they suited her feelings to a nicety. Cousin Jane herself was not very well adapted for the deliverance of pert and lively sallies, but shewed considerable vigour in vituperation; in particular, she once took my father's heart by storm in playing Katharine to his Petruchio; on which occasion, when we wished one another 'good-night,' she whispered in my ear: 'I am so glad I pleased your father, Fred.'

This touched me, and I repeated her remark to Aunt Ben, who observed rather drily, that Jane had seemed of late desirous to please others beside my father.

'True,' said I; 'and much to her credit.'

To which my aunt made no reply. For my part, I was certainly softened towards Cousin Jane, and had by this time almost forgiven her monstrous insinuation with respect to Cecil. As for her brother, he had long been reconciled to her; though, if he had forgotten that scene in the Wallers' cottage, I am quite sure *she* had not. She shewed her keen remembrance of it by never so much as alluding to the subject of his hurt (of which, indeed, he soon recovered), and by avoiding all inquiry into the mode in which he now passed his time. Instead, as formerly, of putting him through a cross-examination (borne with the utmost good-humour) on his return from each day's ramble, and of inveighing against the perils of pole-leaping, she merely hoped that he had enjoyed himself. She would still shew her solicitude about him, indeed, by inquiring of me; but, as it happened, I could now tell her little of Cecil's proceedings. He was applying himself, it seemed, more assiduously than of yore to his studies with the rector, and would excuse himself from my company on that ground. Thus it happened that I fell back upon something like the old mode of life that I had been accustomed to before my cousin's arrival. I had renewed opportunities of enjoying Eleanor's society, and I took again 'long stretches' across country by myself.

During these last, I now enjoyed a new pleasure, namely, the composition of five-act dramas of thrilling interest. My father's tastes and talk, and our evening readings, had at last brought about that condition of mind which, had such circumstances not have been taken into account, would have been called a natural bent for the drama. I wish carefully to avoid the imputation of believing myself at any time to have been a genius: the description of mental food on which I had been nourished, and the poetical atmosphere of my father's study, were probably quite sufficient to account for the existence of such a phenomenon as a playwright of eighteen. At all events, it did exist in my proper person; and once begotten, every incident in my experience tended to its development. My love for Nelly suggested passages of tenderest passion, which I would pour forth to her (very literally) *con amore*, and concerning which I would solicit her opinion without much fear of an unfavourable criticism; the society of Cecil was conducive to the same end, since, as I have said, the one cultivated talent he possessed was of a dramatic kind, while he had the advantage both of having seen plays acted, and of having taken part in them himself. Nothing would please him better, he said, as a profession in life than to be the Burbage to my Shakespeare; and I am sure he spoke from his heart, and had no conception that he was talking nonsense. Then there was a certain Lady Repton, from whom we had long been expecting a visit, who quite unconsciously played a considerable part in these shadow-plays of mine. She had been a great actress—really a great one in times when actors and actresses were thought of far more highly than now-a-days; and a lord had carried her off the stage, and married her, to the grief of thousands. Lord Repton had

been a college friend of my father's, and had promised 'some day' to come to Gatcombe, and introduce his wife to the only man in England who still appreciated the classical drama. I looked forward to this vague engagement with an eager expectation, such as a boy with the wild wish to be a sailor might have felt at whose father's house the immortal Nelson was a promised guest. Nor did I, in my inmost heart, despair of persuading her Ladyship to reassume her profession, so far as to read a few of my own favourite declamations, in character, if not in costume.

In my walks upon the lonely sand-cliff, I apostrophised universal nature, and sent many a rabbit to his burrow palpitating with terror, at my fervid words. On one of these occasions, as, after a long ramble, I was returning by the terrace, just above Wayford, the rain began to fall so heavily that, the shelter of the pines being insufficient, I made for the nearest sand-cave. As I stood in the entrance of it as in a porch, and watched the landscape darkening and dwindling in the down-pour, I heard a noise from the interior—the trundling of a barrow: the proprietor, whom I knew to be Richard Waller, was doubtless at his work within, and I stepped out of the narrow passage, and stood aside, in order to give him egress. A barrowful of the rough scythe-stone in truth it was, but the person who wheeled it turned out, to my extreme astonishment, to be my cousin Cecil. My surprise, however, was surpassed by his confusion. He stood speechless, holding the handles of the barrow very tightly, as amateurs at such labour do, replying to my wondering looks by an uneasy laugh.

'Why, what on earth are you about, Cecil?' asked I. 'I thought you were going to be busy with your books all the afternoon.'

'So I was to have been,' returned he; 'but Mr Bourne was called away to christen a sick child, and I thought I'd come on here, and help poor Waller. His breath is getting very short, you know; and I wanted a little exercise, and—and here I am.'

He was certainly there, though it was somewhat difficult to recognise him. His hair and clothes were covered with sand; his face was damp, as I supposed with toil, and wore the pinched and anxious look that was to be observed in those who pursued his present occupation for a livelihood.

'I don't think your sister would like to hear you amused yourself in this way, Cecil,' said I gravely, for I was really alarmed at his appearance. 'It's far worse than pole-leaping, my good fellow.'

'I shall amuse myself as I please,' returned Cecil haughtily, 'without consulting my sister or anybody else.'

'Nay, Cecil,' remonstrated I, 'you should know me better than to suppose me capable of dictation; but this work, believe me, is very unhealthy; and if you come here often' (here he dropped his eyes, and bit his lips), 'it will most certainly injure you in the end. It's no use your being angry with me, as I see you are. I don't want you to come to harm at Gatcombe, although I am your heir-presumptive, cousin.'

I spoke this with some bitterness, instigated by the remembrance of his sister's base suggestion, and the next instant regretted my irritation. I expected him to exhibit extreme displeasure, whereas he only replied humbly: 'I am sure,

Fred., you wish me nothing but good. I dare say what you have said is very true. I won't help Waller in this way any more. Let us go home.'

'Nay,' said I, 'let us wait till the storm is over.'

I saw that my cousin was very impatient to be gone, but I was greatly averse to leave shelter, and be wetted through to the skin, when five minutes' waiting would prevent it. Perhaps I was a little piqued, too, at Cecil's having preferred Richard Waller's company to mine, when he found himself freed from his studies (for he knew the direction my walk had taken, and might have met me if he chose), and was consequently disinclined to be conciliatory. The clouds began to disperse, and the sun had already tinged the distant fields, when suddenly the sound of some one singing within the cave, and evidently approaching us, delayed my footsteps on the very point of departure.

'I should have thought Richard Waller had no breath to spare for singing,' whispered I to Cecil.

'That's not Richard,' said he, and though his tone was careless, I saw him colour deeply; 'it's Rue;' and at that moment Ruth (or Rue, as the neighbours called her) appeared at the cave-mouth, having in her apron a number of rough scythe-stones, which she dropped upon the ground on seeing me, without an effort to reclaim them.

'Lor, there!' cried she, finding her voice much more readily than Cecil had done in his first moments of embarrassment, 'you gave me quite a start, Master Fred! Who'd ever have thought of seeing you? Richard and I were only saying the other day how long it was since we had seen aught of you at Wayford.' She ran on, in a manner quite unusual with her, and never once, I noticed, looking towards my cousin, who, under cover of this sustained volley of words, began to collect his shattered powers, and presently to add his voice to hers. As for me, I held my tongue, my mind not suggesting any original remark appropriate to the occasion, nor even recalling one out of the wide range of my dramatic reading, rich as it was in 'surprises' and 'situations.' If Ruth Waller had dropped from the clouds, instead of emerging from the earth, I could scarcely have been more taken aback by her appearance; not, indeed, that there was anything wonderful in her being in her brother's 'pit'—for so the caves were called, though they were horizontal—but only in her being there in Cecil's company.

'Richard is a good worker, you see, though so scant of breath,' stammered my cousin; 'and he can supply more than a barrowful of scythe-stones at a time; so Ruth and I both help to carry them out.'

'I understand,' said I drily, for indeed so much of the matter was clear enough.

'Perhaps Master Fred. would like to see Richard,' suggested Ruth to Cecil.

Her coolness staggered me, but had a contrary effect to that which it was designed to have; the familiarity of her address at once suggested to me that this could not have been the first time by many that my cousin and she had met since the day of his accident at Wayford. Moreover, her hint of Richard's presence in the pit had a savour of prudery about it, which, under the circumstances, did not impress me favourably with the fair speaker. That her brother was actually in the cave, I had

no doubt, since, in the silence that followed her last remark, I could hear the strokes of his pickaxe as they grated against the stone, or fell muffled on the damp and yielding sand.

'The rain is over for the present,' said I quietly; 'we had better be off at once before there's another storm, Cecil.' And without waiting for his reply, I started at my usual pace for home.

My cousin remained behind for a few moments, as I knew he would, and presently overtook me. We walked on without speaking for some time, then he laid his hand upon my shoulder, and we both stood still.

'You are not pleased with me and Ruth, I fear,' said he.

'I am not my cousin's keeper,' replied I coldly; 'but if you ask me whether your behaviour seems to me judicious, I must honestly tell you, I do not think it is.'

'Judicious?' reiterated he, with scornful vehemence. 'What, in Heaven's name, would you have me do, Fred? I love this girl with all my heart and soul; nothing shall part me from her—nothing, nothing! I am only happy when I am with her. What other excuse can I frame for being in her company than that of helping her brother in the pit? You who pride yourself on your ingenuity, tell me that.'

Disturbed as I was by this confession, I could scarcely help smiling at his asking me to frame an excuse for the very interviews which were the cause of my uneasiness.

'My dear Cecil,' said I, 'the whole affair is bad, believe me, and will be worse in the end than at the beginning.'

'What do you mean by that?' inquired he, almost with ferocity. 'Do you suppose I mean Ruth harm? Do you take me for a blackguard?'

'No, Cecil, I don't; if I did, I should go straight to my father, and tell him precisely what has happened. If you were otherwise than the noble-hearted, affectionate fellow I know you to be, I should have seen Richard just now, and told him to his face that he was helping to bring his own sister to shame. It is useless to be angry with me, Cecil; such would, I assert, without doubt be the result in nine cases out of ten. In yours, the best that can possibly come of such a courtship is still disappointment and disgrace.'

'Why disgrace?' asked my cousin sharply.

'Because it would be disgraceful in one of your position to marry one in hers.'

It may be objected that for a young gentleman whose studies were dramatic, my judgment was somewhat too practical and commonplace. But there were many reasons that compelled this apparent inconsistency. In the first place, I foresaw the distress that such an attachment must needs cause my father, as my cousin's host and guardian; in the second, although I had had small experience of the world, the nature of my reading had developed a perception of the character of others which was rarely at fault; and my late interview with Ruth had impressed me with the conviction that the girl was crafty, if not designing.

As for the whole tone of the discussion between my cousin and myself, I am quite aware that it was something quite different from what it would have been had we had the advantage of a public school education. My father's teaching had fixed within me a respect for women, which Beaumont

and Fletcher had not destroyed. In this respect, he would even have been deemed Quixotic, for his very definition of Cowardice was about the same which the man of Honour and the World applies to Gallantry. As soon as I was old enough to understand him, he had taken pains to convince me that inferiority of station in a woman, considering her natural tendency to idolise mere rank, ought to be as much her safeguard with generous hearts as are, in other matters, the innocence of childhood or the feebleness of age; and I had at least imbibed so much of his lessons as disinclined me for that ribald talk and thought of women so common among those who have acquired, with the rudiments of the ancient classics, the tone of fashionable schools.

As for Cecil, he was incapable of a deliberate baseness; and by nature so frank, that it was impossible he could be deceiving me as to his real intention. I did not, therefore, fear for Ruth as I did for him. Her marvellous beauty was cause enough for any man's falling in love with her; whereas I opined that Rue Waller was not the girl to forget the plain features and dusky hue of my cousin Cecil in her appreciation of the qualities of his heart. That he did not forget them himself was evident from his reply to my observation that marriage with one in Ruth's position would be disgraceful.

'Position?' echoed he. 'Do you suppose, then, that I don't know what is my position as compared with yours, or, if your kindness mislikes so personal a comparison, compared with that of your father? I am—God help me!—but an ignorant half-caste; only tolerated—I will not say by you or yours, but by the world at large, on account of my wealth. Without my riches, for what should I be valued; I had almost said, cousin, by whom?' He dropped his voice, and spoke these last words with a tender pathos that went to my heart.

'Cecil,' said I, 'it pains me to hear you speak in this manner, and yet what you have said emboldens me to use an argument which otherwise I should have shrunk from. If, indeed, you be such as you describe (though your face is comely enough in my eyes, and the blood that moves in your veins seems that of a brother), and if it be your wealth alone that is likely to attract strangers towards you, what is it, think you, that has attracted this young girl, whose poverty must, by contrast, have made your riches seem ten times as great as they really are.'

'You are right,' returned Cecil quietly. 'Ruth loves me not, except for the wealth that I shall bring her. But I love her for herself; and it is enough for me that she does not loathe me.'

I looked at him with wonder, in which, perhaps, some contempt involuntarily mingled.

'Ah! you fancy you have loved,' said he, in low grave tones, with an affectionate smile; 'but you have never really done so, Fred; or rather, I should say, it is not possible that your love and mine should be of the same sort. You and Eleanor have each something to give, something to exchange; but, to the woman whom I would fain persuade to love me, I have nothing to give—nothing to barter for her love; so, you see, Fred, I must buy it.'

Never shall I forget the air of indescribable wretchedness with which he uttered those words.

'I have never deceived myself in this matter,'

continued he, 'and much less Ruth. To affect to help her brother at his work in yonder pit is, indeed, a feeble pretext of sympathy, which imposes upon neither of us; but I can't give him money, Fred. When she asks me for it—which, perhaps, she will do some day—then it will be time enough to give him money, and so to buy her.'

If Cecil's face was plain, it was at least freighted with an emotion more tender and pitiful than I had ever seen expressed in human features. And he was going to waste all that wealth of love upon a woman whose perceptions would probably never detect its existence, and who would—to judge her even by his own estimate—be doubtless prepared to exchange for it a few hundreds of pounds! The thought of a compromise had, indeed, at first occurred to me; but no one who now beheld Cecil's face, and heard his tones, could have entertained it for a moment. Whatever she might have taken, nothing but herself, I felt sure, would have contented him.

'And how is all this to end, Cecil?' asked I; 'for every dream must have some end.'

He took no notice of the tone of incredulity, which, I confess, was affected rather than real; for my cousin's nature I knew to be full as resolute as it was impulsive.

'The end is, Fred., that I shall marry her.'

'Nay,' said I; 'that will be but the beginning of the end—the first step in a life of wretchedness.'

'We cannot foretell the future, cousin,' answered he quietly; 'but, unless something happens, I shall marry Ruth when I come of age.'

'Unless what happens?' inquired I, pleased to hear that he was in no passionate haste, and in good hope that some loophole of escape for him would present itself in the intervening years.

'Unless your father comes to hear of it,' said he, 'in which case I shall marry her at once—at all hazards.'

There was nothing to prevent him. Nor was my father the man, even if he had the power, to adopt any stringent measures in such a case. 'It will be a sad blow for your sister Jane,' said I, expressing a reflection rather than advancing a new argument.

For the first time, a shadow of irresolution seemed to flit across his face; but it passed away immediately, leaving it calm and determined as before. 'If my sister gets to know of it,' said he, 'that would have the same effect of precipitating matters.' Here he hesitated. 'But I tell you frankly, Fred., that I wish her not to know. It would not shake my purpose—nothing can, nor shall. But might I ask you, being more near to me as friend than kinsman, not to tell her, not to tell any one about Ruth?'

What could I do but promise? What was the use of telling when the news would only hasten on his rash resolve to its fulfilment. So I said: 'Your secret, Cecil, is safe with me. I would that I could wish you joy of it.'

'You do not wish me ill, I know,' said he, with his winning smile.

I shook my head. Indeed, I did not wish him ill, but I knew that ill awaited him. I think he knew it too; but neither he nor I could have imagined, nor even have dreamed, save in some weird, horrid nightmare, the shape that ill was doomed to take.

ODE TO SUMMER.

SUMMER's coming! Summer's coming!
Hark! the early bees are humming;
Fast the infant buds are springing,
Fragrance to the summer bringing.
See, the rose-buds, lately sleeping,
Sweet in modest beauty peeping—
Bursting buds, in countless numbers,
Waking from their winter slumbers.

Buttercups, that youthful fancies
Link with moonlight fairy dances;
Foxglove bells, that zephyrs tingle,
When the light and darkness mingle.
Marigolds and pale primroses—
Gems in rustic lovers' posies—
Star the verdant meadows, gracing
Grassy plains, where kine are pacing.

Come, sweet laughing sunny Summer—
How we wait the welcome comer!
Teeming earth and air are mumming
Countless hymns for Summer coming.
Glowing buds, that beauty blisses,
Ope their sweet mouths to thy kisses;
Pure and fragrant incense breathing,
All around them sweets bequeathing.

Lost to sight are skylarks chiming,
High at heaven's own portals climbing.
Hark! the far-spread woodlands ringing
With her thousand voices, singing
Gladsome; heart-awakened treasure!
Sweet-mouthed warblings lost to measure.
Oh, the heart-felt, joyful chorus
When thy balmy breath comes o'er us!

Come, with Summer's riches laden,
Bring love's emblems to the maiden;
Golden bud, and silver blossom,
Fair as is her own pure bosom.
Bring the butterfly to childhood;
Bring rich beauty to the wild wood;
To the bowers of happy lovers,
Lend thy fragrant shady covers.

Breathe upon the hills and mountains;
Smile on babbling rills and fountains;
Touch the teeming garden's treasure—
Fair beyond a poet's measure;
Life, nor joy, nor beauty lingers,
Where thou lay'st thy fairy fingers;
All, in fond devoted duty,
Leap to Life, and Love, and Beauty.

Thrilling, with a deep devotion,
Earth and air in sweet emotion;
In the gushing tide of feeling,
All the heart's best love revealing.
Come, sweet Summer! hours are fleeting;
Gardens, woods, and meads are greeting—
Waiting for their summer dresses,
Flowery garlands, tassels, tresses.